

January 2018

Carolina country

Carolina Country Scenes

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Published by  **NC Electric Cooperatives**

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Beech Mountain Ski Resort celebrates 50 years—page 32

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On the Cover

"This little bird was coming to the deck bird feeder during the winter of 2017. It was so cold, and ice was on the trees, but he didn't seem to mind as long as I kept the feeder full!" Photographed by Cindy Barnes, Midland, a member of Union Power. Our gallery of your best photos starts on page 10.

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Carolina Country Scenes

A gallery of your best photos, submitted through our annual photo contest

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Get the Perfect Shot with your Smartphone

These tips can take your phone photography to the next level.

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Tales of the Plott Hound

A local author has become an advocate for our state dog.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Roadside Attractions

One of the best parts of a road trip is what you find along the way—tell us your favorite NC stop. See page 31 for details.

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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to nearly 900,000 homes and businesses. The 26 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.


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Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

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Resiliency: Rural North Carolina's Greatest Asset

By Patrick Woodie



If you have paid any attention to the news lately, you may be feeling less than optimistic about the future of our rural communities. The recent national coverage of our rural places has defaulted to the simplistic narrative of the rural/urban divide, which equates rural with distress and decline, and urban with prosperity and growth.

That narrative is easy to spin—and easier to sell with pictures of abandoned store fronts and dilapidated homes. But it simply does not add up to what we at the NC Rural Center see in our day-to-day work in the communities and small towns of rural North Carolina.

And it was definitely not what we heard when more than 400 rural supporters convened in Raleigh in November for the NC Rural Center's 2017 Rural Assembly.

We heard from communities charting their own course for the future, creating opportunities when no one else thought it was possible. We heard stories of places transforming their economies and communities in ways that are both unique and remarkable, but—most importantly—doable.

The common denominator: strong and effective local leadership.

Kinston Mayor B.J. Murphy shared the story of his community's creative use of local assets and talents to reinvent itself as a nationally recognized artisan food destination, anchored by the entrepreneurial drive of Lenoir County-native and celebrity chef Vivian Howard.

Kinston's story is that of individuals investing in a community. It is a story of a love for a place. It is a story of resiliency.

Resiliency: perhaps our rural places' greatest asset.

We heard many examples of rural resiliency, like the innovative effort in McDowell County to improve health outcomes in low-income communities by educating residents on

good nutrition and healthy eating habits. The initiative is empowering residents to make a change that can have profound effects on reducing chronic diseases.

Person County recognized that broadband access was critical for the county's future and took the initiative to leverage county assets to cut in half the number of homes lacking high-speed internet access, allocating \$4 million over four years to build out the county's last-mile infrastructure.


Brunswick County launched the "Brunswick Guarantee," which provides local high school students the opportunity to continue their education at the local community college without going into debt.

As we enter 2018, there are two things we know: rural North Carolinians are not unfamiliar with hard work, and there's nothing wrong with rural North Carolina that can't be solved by rural North Carolinians.

Rural communities are ready to solve the problems facing them today, just as they have overcome challenges in the past. The Rural Center is ready to join these communities and their advocates, including North Carolina's electric cooperatives, to address issues such as inadequate high-speed broadband coverage, limited access to quality health care, and the need to grow and sustain successful local small businesses and entrepreneurs.

As we move into the New Year, let's remember the words of Kelly Ryan, CEO of the Wisconsin-based community foundation Incourage, who spoke at the Rural Assembly:

"Don't let other people save rural. I believe rural will save the nation."

We think so, too. 

Patrick Woodie is president of the NC Rural Center (ncruralcenter.org), the nonprofit organization with a mission to develop, promote and implement sound economic strategies to improve the quality of life of rural North Carolinians.



THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

Carolina Country Scenes

We always get great feedback from our readers, including recipes, memories from days gone by and story suggestions. We also receive some amazing photos through our annual photo contest, which we're proud to showcase this month. And for budding photographers or those of you who want to hone your skills, we have smartphone photo tips from an expert on page 18.

—Scott Gates, editor



Rhonda (right) with North Carolina author N.A. Granger

A Festive Reader

Thank you so much for the book festival article in the September issue ("Local Literary Treasures," page 12). We had a beautiful fall morning at the Festival of Books and Authors in Winston-Salem. So many books, engaging authors and the food trucks were amazing (I had a "Freaky Fry Bucket" from Food Freaks). Wouldn't have known about it without the article. Love our Carolina Country! Thank you!

Rhonda Reedy, Thomasville,
A member of EnergyUnited

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Experiencing a power outage? Please contact your electric co-op directly to ensure prompt service. Visit ncelectriccooperatives.com/co-ops to find yours online.

Crawl Space Caution

The article "Closing the Crawl Space" (November 2017, page 36) failed to mention that soil gas is a real problem in North Carolina. After spending \$6,000+ on a total encapsulation, we are now faced with this horrid situation.

Perhaps you could enlighten members about this before doing a closed crawl space. We still have not found a solution.

Robert Belton, Hillsborough
A member of Piedmont Electric

Editor's Note: Thank you for the note, Robert. We forwarded it to the author, Hannah McKenzie of Advanced Energy. She and her colleague, Building Science Specialist Jonathan Coulter, had this response:

On rare occasions an enclosed crawl space creates a perfect storm, of sorts, to produce an aroma homeowners describe smelling like cat pee. It is a million-in-one chance for a home to be afflicted rather than improved with a closed crawl space.

Every home and crawl space is unique (related to moisture exposure from surrounding landscape, drainage, height, vapor barrier coverage, etc.). Yes, odor is a known potential unintended consequence to closing crawl spaces. Other potential unintended consequences are: 1) wood damaged from drying too quickly, 2) increased radon levels in certain locations, 3) flooding in closed crawl space when crawl drain in directly connected to foundation drain or gutters/downspout drain.

I have not been involved with or know firsthand of any research results or data on remediation, but my opinion is to increase the ventilation below the poly/vapor barrier to minimize the odor getting into the crawl and house.



BEMC's Newest Recruit

Four-year-old Gray Woodard recently dressed up as his favorite community worker for school: a Brunswick EMC lineman. Gray drew inspiration from his dad, BEMC Control Center Technician Gary Woodard.

"When Gray grows up he wants to work at BEMC, just like his dad," says Anna Woodard, Gary's wife. "We support BEMC and our linemen who are out working hard to restore power to those who are in need!"

Eastern NC Love

I like reading your magazine, but when are you going to start giving the Eastern part of state some love, like Wilson and Greenville and Ayden? You need to start putting something in about all of the state once in a while.

Anthony Aytch, Ayden
A member of Pitt & Greene EMC

Editor's Note: Thank you for pointing that out, Anthony, and we agree. I'm sure we miss a lot of great stories from around the state, month to month. Readers can contact us at editor@carolinacountry.com with story ideas from their neck of the woods.

CCEC's Conrad Retires After 38 Years of Service to Co-ops

Jake Joplin named CEO and general manager

Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative's (CCEC) Jake Joplin is taking over the leadership reins from CEO and General Manager Craig Conrad, who retired this month. Joplin is a native of Rutherford County, and if the name sounds familiar, that's because he is the son of Forest City-based Rutherford EMC CEO Joe Joplin.

A graduate of NC State University's School of Engineering, Joplin has worked for CCEC since 2000. He has served as staff engineer, vice-president of engineering and operations, and most recently as chief operating officer. In addition to his engineering degree, he also has earned his professional engineering certification.

"I have every confidence that the level of service our members will receive will only get better in the future," Joplin said. "We have a great family of employees working day-in and day-out to bring safe, reliable, and economical power to member's homes and businesses. As we go forward, our members can be assured that we will continue to respect the traditions of the cooperative and its founding principles, while exploring innovative energy solutions that meet changes in the industry and in the needs of our members."

Joplin and his wife, Magan, live in Morehead City, and have three children, Kaitlyn, Isaac and Nathan.



Craig Conrad



Jake Joplin

"I am truly honored to be part of this cooperative family, working to improve the communities we serve," Joplin said.

Conrad served as CEO and general manager of the Newport-based co-op beginning in 2000. He represented North Carolina cooperatives on a variety of state and national committees, and has had great satisfaction leading the co-op through changes including its merger with Harkers Island EMC, AMI deployment and other technology improvements.

During Conrad's tenure, CCEC grew from 32,211 meters to 40,218, with a plant value that has more than doubled to \$139 million. His career serving electric co-ops began in 1980 as a project engineer with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Electrification Administration.

Conrad's service to CCEC has been more than managing the nuts and bolts of the co-op; he has truly been committed to the co-op community.

"There is no single organization in the local area that provides or gives back like the cooperative—the employees themselves in their private lives, our Harold Anderson Jr. Memorial Fund, the members' generosity through Operation RoundUP®, and the Carteret-Craven Electric Foundation and employee groups that work toward raising money for a variety of charities."

—Lisa Galizia, CCEC

NC Co-ops Receive USDA Funding

Three North Carolina electric cooperatives recently received a total of more than \$127.6 million in funding for infrastructure improvements from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The funds will help the co-ops maintain and strengthen their systems, as well as contribute to job creation and economic development in rural North Carolina.

"The presence of strong rural electric infrastructure is critical to ensuring the success and reliability of North Carolina's power grid, and to maintaining high quality of life throughout our state," said Nelle Hotchkiss, senior vice president for corporate relations for North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives. "Given this, we thank USDA for their continued partnership in powering and empowering the communities we serve."

The following cooperatives were awarded loans:

- **Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative** was awarded nearly \$12 million to build nine new miles of line, as well as make other system improvements. The loan includes \$1.1 million for smart grid projects.

- **EnergyUnited** received \$72 million to build 283 miles of line, as well as improve 132 miles and make other system improvements. The loan includes \$796,875 for smart grid projects.

- **North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation** received a loan for nearly \$43.8 million for generation system improvement projects.

The funding is part of USDA Rural Development's Electric Program, the successor to the Rural Electrification Administration. A total of \$2.5 billion was awarded nationally and will support infrastructure upgrades, job creation and economic development in 27 states.

The loans also include \$127 million for smart grid projects, including technological enhancements such as metering, substation automation, computer applications, two-way communications and geospatial information systems to help increase the reliability and efficiency of electric power systems.

—Lisa Crawley, North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives

An Encyclopedia of Modern Electricity

A new report provides a clear overview of our ever-evolving power grid

By Paul Wesslund

If someone decided that every high school student should understand how the nation's system of electric wires and power plants works, where would they turn? A new study from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) would be a good start. Despite its dry title, the "Staff Report to the Secretary on Electric Markets and Reliability" does well in describing the complex state of the nation's electric grid—an ever-evolving electricity generation and delivery system.

"It's incredibly well-written, well-researched, very thorough, very comprehensive," says Pam Silberstein, senior director of power supply for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). "It's a well put-together compilation of the state of the grid."

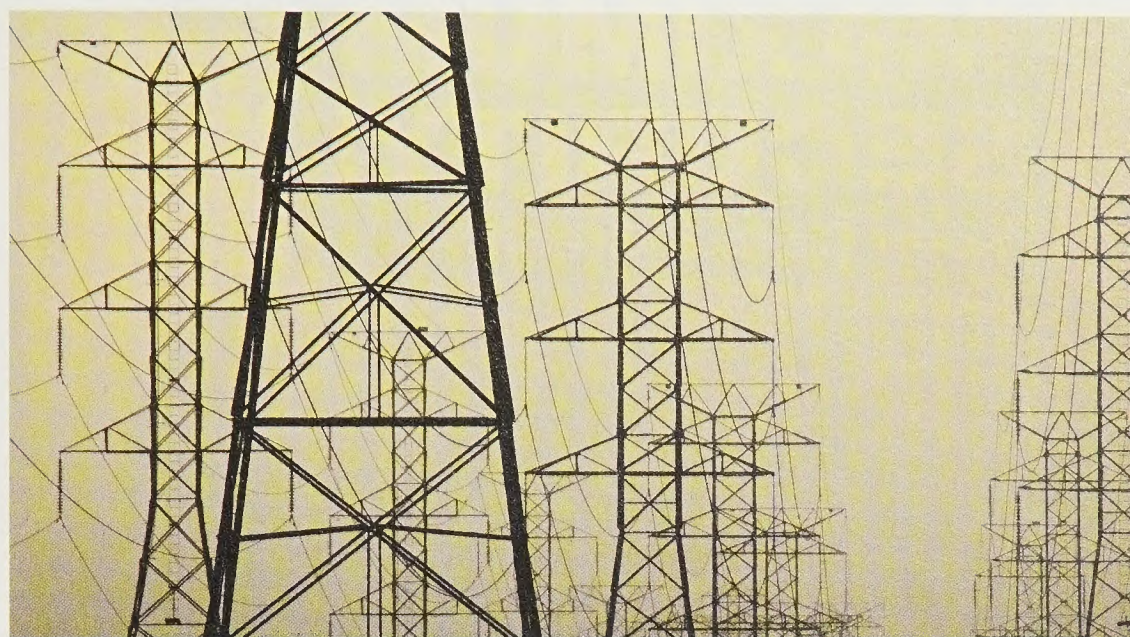
Silberstein sees the grid study as a report that puts in one place all the changes affecting utilities and what those changes might mean.

The study is a quick-turnaround response to an April 14 memo from Energy Secretary Rick Perry for his staff to "explore critical issues central to protecting the long-term reliability of the electric grid."

Plenty has changed for electric utilities over the past 15 years, and the study describes that new landscape with enough detail to satisfy the most hard-core energy nerd:

A changing fuel mix

About 15 percent of the nation's power plants have been retired since 2002, mainly coal and nuclear plants. That trend is expected to continue due to low natural gas prices, slower growth in demand for electricity, environmental regulations and more solar and wind power. While new generating capacity from sources including natural gas and renewable energy



has amounted to about three times the plant retirements, that radical change in the energy mix requires new ways of managing the flow of electricity from the power plants where it is made, to the homes and businesses where it is used.

Improving resiliency

People expect better reliability in their electricity; enough that many utilities have supplemented their goals of reliability with a new term: "resilience." Basically, that means being able to get the lights back on faster after a natural disaster. That has utilities experimenting with things like utility-scale storage batteries, such as what is being utilized in the Ocracoke Island microgrid (see "A First for the State," May 2017, page 8), and more precise targeting of which parts of the grid should get power restored first following an outage.

Renewable energy standards

Several states, including North Carolina, have passed Renewable Portfolio Standards that mandate levels of renewable energy, as well as demand side management or energy efficiency measures. Requirements vary by state, creating a regulatory patchwork across the national grid.

Grid management

New and growing additions to the electric grid are changing the way

it needs to be managed. Those new power sources include rooftop solar panels that sell electricity back to the utility, natural gas plants that require new pipelines, solar and wind farms in remote areas that need to be connected with new transmission lines, and "demand response programs" in which utilities can turn off home water heaters and air conditioners for short periods during times of peak demand.

The full report is available from DOE at bit.ly/grid-report_2017. In a cover letter for the report, Perry gives a nod to the men and women who work every day to bring safe and reliable electricity to homes and businesses across the country.

"America is blessed with ingenuity, technology, and millions of dedicated men and women in the industry who do a tremendous job of guiding the process of generating, transmitting, and distributing electricity," Perry said. "From engineers to miners and everyone else along the way, the process of providing the electricity required to power our homes and businesses is remarkable. The people who do this important work should be recognized for their dedication and success."

Paul Wesslund writes on cooperative issues for the NRECA, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

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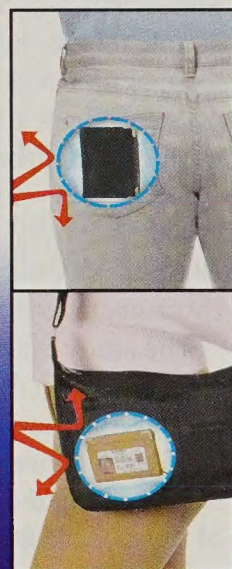


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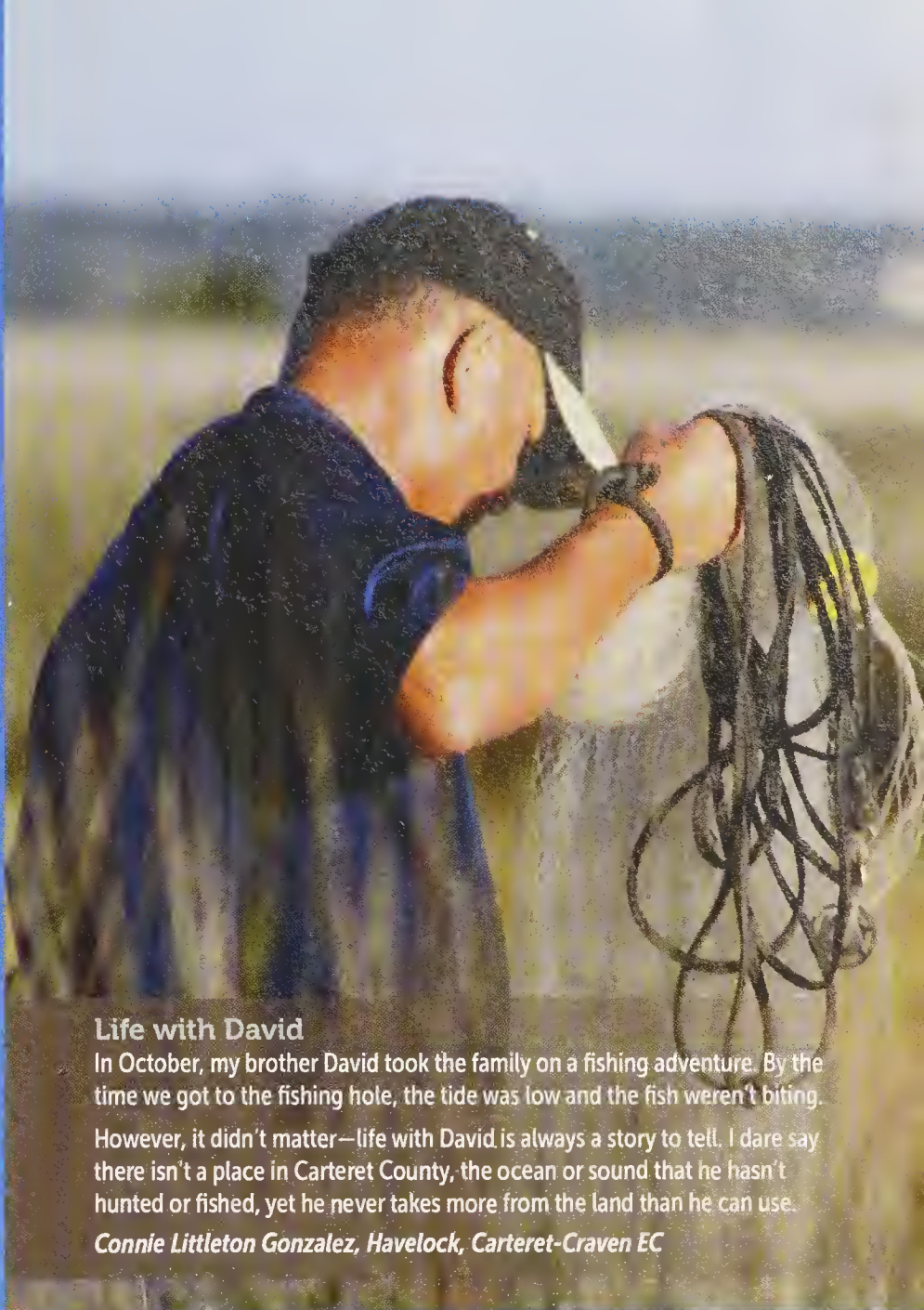
*A gallery of your
best photos*

Thanks to everyone who submitted pictures to our annual photo contest. The judges chose from among 400 photos of people and places throughout North Carolina. In addition to these images, we'll run more in our "Photo of the Month" magazine feature. And even more selections will appear as the "Photo of the Week" on our website (carolinacountry.com), where there's a collection of all pictures that have appeared there. Our Facebook and Instagram pages also routinely showcase reader photos.

—The editors



Sunset Beach Snack
Chuck Farah, Sunset Beach,
Brunswick EMC



Life with David

In October, my brother David took the family on a fishing adventure. By the time we got to the fishing hole, the tide was low and the fish weren't biting. However, it didn't matter—life with David is always a story to tell. I dare say there isn't a place in Carteret County, the ocean or sound that he hasn't hunted or fished, yet he never takes more from the land than he can use.

Connie Littleton Gonzalez, Havelock, Carteret-Craven EC



Adventure's End

Just behind my house in Belhaven lies Pungo Creek, a paddler's paradise. I love quiet moments on the creek shared with dolphins, mullet, bald eagles and otters.

Ginny Mason, Bath, Tideland EMC

A tall, lattice-structured transmission tower stands against a deep blue twilight sky. The tower's lines stretch across the frame, and the ground below is a dark, textured field.

Transmission Tower

I captured these last remaining shots of the Milky Way before the moonlight ruined it.

Scott Cureton, Polkton, Pee Dee Electric

A red wooden barn with a corrugated metal roof. Inside the barn, numerous stalks of tobacco are hanging from a rack, drying in the dim light.

Tobacco Curing in the Barn

Suzi Phillips, Waynesville, Haywood EMC

A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a pink shirt and blue overalls, is crouching on the ground. She is holding a small yellow flower in her hands, looking down at it intently.

Miss Bailee Grace

Our 4-year-old granddaughter, Miss Bailee Grace, picks a "flower" by the old red canning cellar.

Dina Combs, Sugar Grove, Blue Ridge Energy

A Ferris wheel with colorful lights (red, white, and blue) is visible in the background. In the foreground, the backs of two people's heads are visible as they look towards the fair.

Fair Fun

Chris and Neileigh Gerald take in the Richmond County Agricultural Fair.

Elaine Martin, Rockingham, Pee Dee Electric

A close-up of a baby's face. The baby has bright blue eyes and is holding a small yellow duckling in front of its mouth. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene.

Just Ducky

Ducklings set the scene for my grandson's Easter photo, and he watched each of them carefully. At the right moment, he picked one up. Surprise!

*Submitted by Pam Gwyn, Pilot Mountain, Surry-Yadkin EMC
Photographed by Nick McCrary*

A dark, murky underwater scene. A banded water snake is visible, its head and tongue extending towards the surface of the water.

Beneath the Surface

While visiting the Wilson Creek area north of Morganton, I followed this banded water snake along the edge of the creek and observed it "smelling" the water. The snake repeatedly tapped its tongue to the surface, probably trying to locate prey.

Mathias Engelmann, Iron Station, EnergyUnited



Eve & Evelyn Face the Fog

My family and I raise sheep in Mt. Olive. We lamb in the spring and show the sheep at the NC State Fair in the fall, where we recently won supreme champion! Many a memory has been made with our sheep, including this one with Eve and Evelyn and an unbelievably foggy morning.

Marisa Linton, Mount Olive, Tri-County EMC



Scouting for Subjects

While visiting my father-in-law's farm in Grantham, the soybean fields and wild brush provided opportunities to shoot macro photos of a large variety of insects. My sons enjoyed scouting for my potential "subjects."

Amy Jackson, Stanley, EnergyUnited

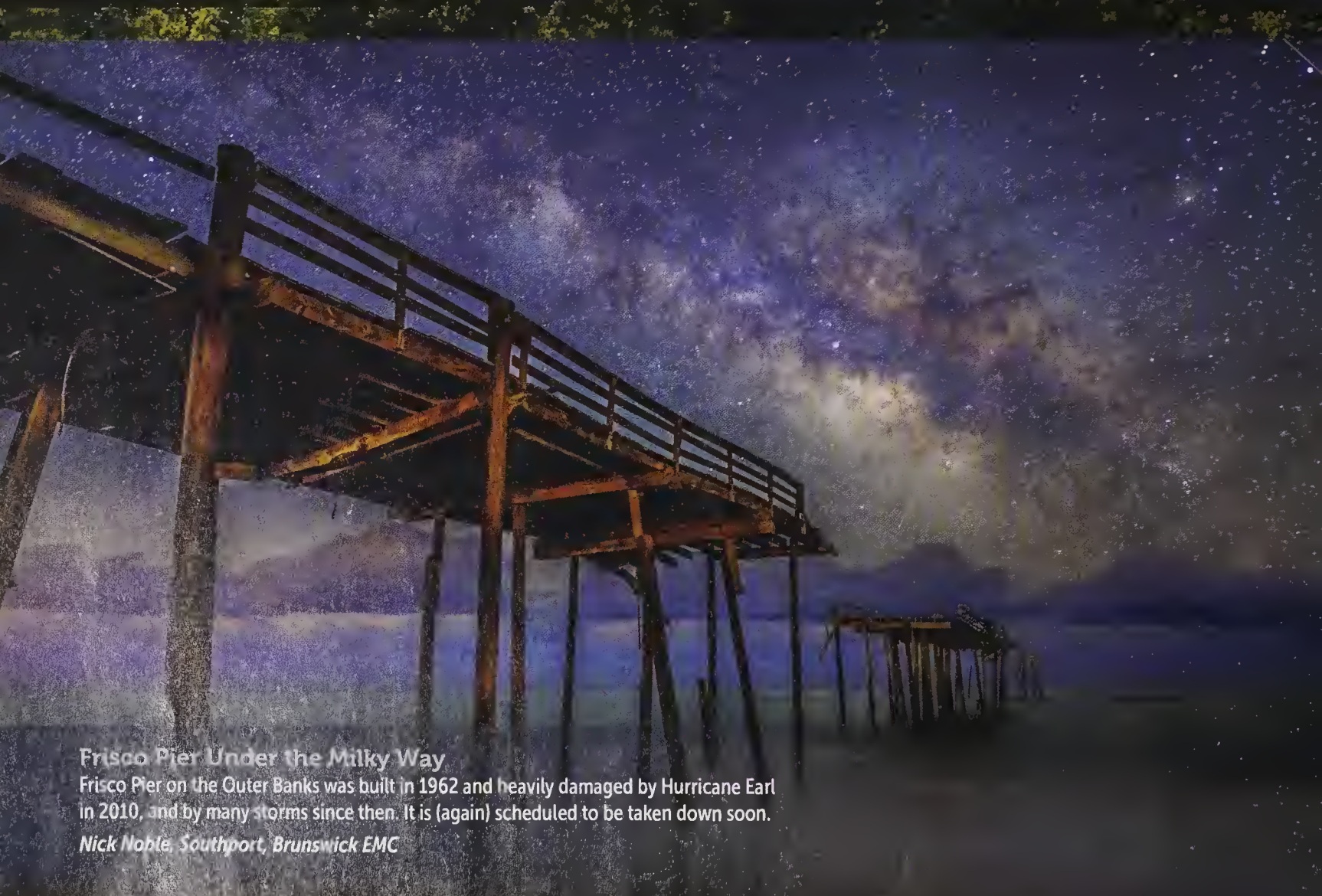




Fairytale Woodlands

On this morning, dew collected in the air and reflected beams of sun onto a gargantuan garden of wild sunflowers. It was quiet and still, yet alive with the orchestra of nature.

Austin Kiker, Marshville



Frisco Pier Under the Milky Way

Frisco Pier on the Outer Banks was built in 1962 and heavily damaged by Hurricane Earl in 2010, and by many storms since then. It is (again) scheduled to be taken down soon.

Nick Noble, Southport, Brunswick EMC



Wipeout!

I drove out to Nags Head to take some pictures of surfers, as the moon was providing lots of tug and the waves were breaking 6-to-8-feet in height. This surfer, Donovan from Virginia Beach, had some good runs, but in this particular instance it was a WIPEOUT!

David Peterson, Lillington, South River EMC



Big Dipper Unveiled

On a cool, clear, late summer night, my wife, Cindy, and I went to Bridal Veil Falls outside of Highlands to photograph the waterfall with stars in the background. The dazzling stars of the dipper stood out from the other stars, making it easily recognizable.

Edward Boos, Scaly Mountain, Haywood EMC



Lazy Summer Day

Our 5-year-old granddaughter, Addyson Claire Witt, sits on the front porch contemplating life on a lazy summer afternoon in Rockwell.

Submitted by Carol McCall, Oak Island, Brunswick-EMC

Photographed by Shelia Witt



Chatty Chirper

A bird set up house in my sister-in-law's planter in Kernersville. On this day, one of the babies was feeling especially photogenic—and chatty!

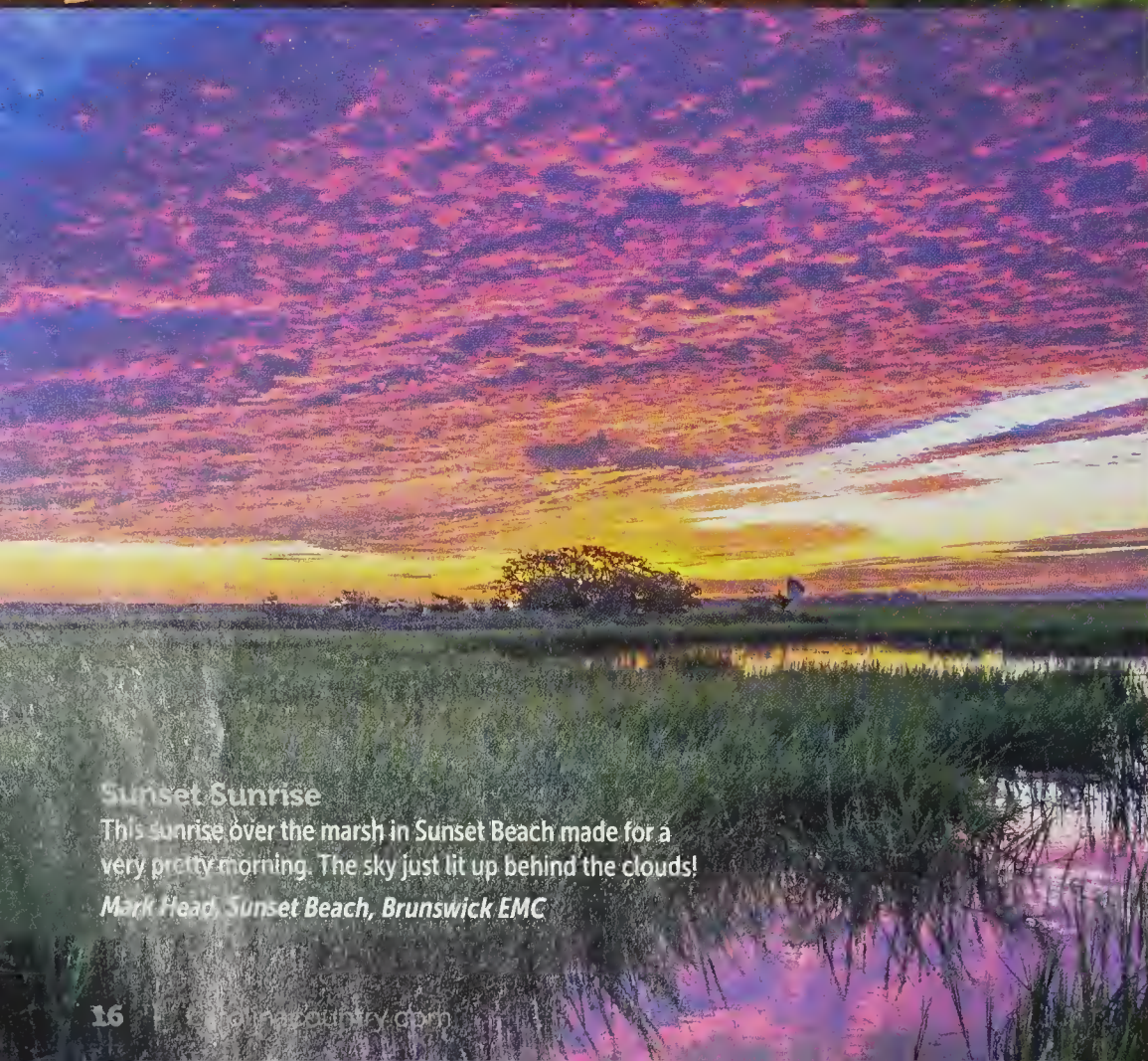
Melinda Emerson, Greensboro



Sunflower Surveillance

My husband's grandparents' Franklinville garden just before sunset.

Amanda Quinzi, Candler, Haywood EMC



Sunset Sunrise

This sunrise over the marsh in Sunset Beach made for a very pretty morning. The sky just lit up behind the clouds!

Mark Head, Sunset Beach, Brunswick EMC



Okra Over and Out

Okra dries out during the winter.

Wanda Little, Monroe, Union Power



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Get the Perfect Shot with your Smartphone

These tips can take your phone photography to the next level

Story and photos by Mark Hirsch

There is a saying, “the best camera is the one you have with you.” In this age of digital technology, that camera is most often a smartphone.

As a professional photographer, all of my corporate, commercial and editorial photography work is produced using a Canon 5D Mark III camera, but my favorite camera is the one in my iPhone 6. I am most well-known for the images in my coffee table book, “That Tree.” All of those images were produced using the even less sophisticated camera in my iPhone 4S.

It is important to understand that it’s not about the camera. It’s about the eyes and the mind behind the camera. It’s about our ability to translate the world around us into a creative photographic record that reflects our personal interpretation of that world. Mastering the operation of our cameras so we can make pictures that represent our own vision is what sets us apart as individual photographers.

Here are some tips that I hope will guide you and help you get the most out of your smartphone camera (see the facing page for more).

Read your smartphone owner’s manual to familiarize yourself with its camera functionality.

The iPhone operates differently than an Android phone and each brand has its own unique functionality.

Manually set the focus and exposure.

The camera in your smartphone is always in auto mode. It has no idea what is most important when you point it at a scene to make a picture. Are you photographing a person in a scene or are you photographing a flower in the foreground? The smartphone camera is not that smart and has no idea. You need to tell it by touching your finger on the subject of your picture on the screen so the camera will focus on it and also set the exposure based on that point of interest.

Manually change the exposure.

When viewing a scene and making a picture, your smartphone will display the photo as it will appear. If the scene looks too dark or too bright, you can change it by touching your screen and sliding your finger up or down to alter the exposure.

Deactivate the digital zoom on your smartphone.

Digital zoom reduces your smartphone camera’s resolution. Get closer or move farther away to alter your composition and if you want to zoom on the image, crop it on your computer for better image quality. Consider using lens attachments like OOWA, Olloclip and Moment lenses to zoom in when making pictures without reducing the resolution of your smartphone.

Try using your volume button as the shutter release.

Your movement when making a picture often causes images to be out of focus. Touching your screen requires holding the phone with only one hand, making you less stable, causing out-of-focus pictures. Using the volume button will help you be steadier when making a picture. When possible, also take more than one photo so you have more options to pick from. 📷

Mark Hirsch is a Wisconsin-based editorial and corporate photographer, artist, author of the book “That Tree” (thattree.net), and a public speaker. Contact Mark at markhirschphoto@gmail.com.



carolinacountry.com/extras

Read more tips from Mark, including general tips for all smartphone cameras, iPhone-specific tips, and general photography pointers.



Using quality of light at sunset and composing to emphasize the broad expanse of sky, I offset a tree against the sunset. (Tripod-mounted iPhone 6 using the AnyCase smartphone holder)



Here I used framing and the rule of thirds compositional techniques to photograph an old schoolhouse. (iPhone 6)



I placed the subject of this portrait in front of a neutral scene and offset his placement in the composition with some of his collectible gas station elements. (iPhone 6 with OOWA 2.5X telephoto lens)



I composed this shot by placing my subject against a neutral backdrop, with a strong foreground and a strong background object bookending and framing him in the scene. (iPhone 6)



Here I focused on the boat and exposed for the sunset, which made the boat become a silhouette. (iPhone 6)



I used selective focus for this composition by placing my finger on the water droplets on my truck window to establish my focal point. (iPhone 4S)



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Eco-friendly Living

Three ways to bring sustainability into your home

Creating a more sustainable home is becoming the new norm. Sixty-seven percent of consumers from across the world prefer products from sustainable sources, according to a recent Nielsen survey.

From fixing water leaks to buying eco-friendly products, making your home more sustainable can be very rewarding. Here are three ways you can make a big difference (and spare your wallet).

Energy, water audits

Do a home energy audit by checking windows and doors for air leakage, and check pipes, including faucets, toilet flappers and valves, for water leaks.

Air leakage from windows and doors can definitely impact your home's energy use. The United States Department of Energy reports sealing uncontrolled air leaks will save you at least 10 to 20 percent on your heating and cooling bills. Discuss sealing options, such as weather strips, with your local hardware store, and contact your local electric cooperative for tips on what else to look for during an energy audit.

As far as water leaks, the Environmental Protection Agency states that tightening pipes and repairing leaks can prevent the average household from leaking 10,000

gallons of water per year. These types of leaks are often easy to fix, which can save you about 10 percent on water bills.

Recycle food waste


Composting means recycling decomposed organic material waste with manure to turn it into rich soil. By composting in your own backyard, nutrients are restored into the ground and less waste ends up in landfills, waterways and water treatment facilities. What's more: landfills cause organic waste to generate greenhouse gasses, so methane emissions are greatly reduced when waste is composted. This practice also can help you save money, since it allows you to purchase fewer soil conditioners and bagged manures for your lawn and garden. You can also use compost for houseplants.

Composting materials include vegetable peels, coffee grounds, shredded newspaper, grass clippings and leaves. If you have space in your yard, fence off a small area and place scraps directly there. Or, for convenience sake, buy a closed bin for

your kitchen and then empty the bin's food scraps into the designated place periodically. To learn more, visit The North Carolina Composting Council's website at carolinacompost.com.

Up with down

Changing your bedding to down and feather can help reduce your heating bill. Down and feather pillows, comforters, duvets and mattress toppers provide great warmth, which lets you lower the thermostat. You can save as much as 10 percent on your heating bill, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, by lowering the thermostat by 10 to 15 degrees while you sleep.

Also, down and feathers are a natural byproduct of the food industry. Recycling them into comforters means the down and feathers do not end up in our landfills. These natural fill materials have a lower carbon footprint than products made from synthetic fill materials. They are biodegradable and can be composted. For more information, visit the American Down and Feather Council's website at downandfeathercouncil.com. 

—Brandpoint

Be Fire Savvy

Reduce risk of injury with these steps

Gathering around the hearth this winter? While a cozy, charming fire is the perfect place to relax, don't take a vacation from practicing safety guidelines. Stay safe with the following checklist.

Alarms, detectors

- ☐ Check all of your home's life-saving safety devices, including carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms for functionality and to ensure batteries are still working. You should do this periodically, but it's especially important during the holidays and other times when you use your fireplace.

Fireplaces

- ☐ Many decorating items and materials are combustible, so make sure yours are a safe distance from the fireplace.
- ☐ Conduct annual maintenance on your fireplace, chimney and associated elements.




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Can your kids stop, drop and roll? A video from the Burn Prevention Network helps them learn basic fire safety.

- ☐ Outfit your gas fireplace with a safety screens to prevent burns.
- ☐ Remember that the metal in safety screens can heat up, and your heating equipment—fireplaces, stoves, inserts and their surrounding material—will remain hot for some time after use.
- ☐ Visit heatilator.com for more tips, including a video about fireplace safety.

Candles

- ☐ Lit candles add warmth and splendor to rooms, but they come with certain risks. Place these burning beauties in safe locations away from fabrics such as drapes and curtains, table centerpieces and other flammable objects.
- ☐ Place candles where they can't be easily knocked over.
- ☐ Only burn candles in occupied rooms—if they are burning, never leave them unattended.

- ☐ If you have children, pets or an infirm person living with you, battery-operated, flameless candles or scented candle warmers make for safer alternatives that can offer you peace of mind. 

—StatePoint

Educate your children

Cultivate a culture of fire safety at your home. Teach your children about the dangers of fire, and have them practice the "stop, drop and roll" method to smother a fire. Also:

- ☐ Review fireplace rules with them, and also with guests they have over for playdates.
- ☐ Place matches, lighters and remotes that operate fireplaces out of reach for children. Out of sight, too, is best.
- ☐ Don't use "fun" lighters that look like toys.
- ☐ Consider placing a safety gate around your fireplace.
- ☐ Always monitor children and pets near a lit fireplace or one that was recently turned off.



Take Back Your Garage

Five hacks to tame, maximize space

The new year is a great time to start afresh. For many, that means becoming better organized so we can enjoy more streamlined surroundings and easily locate the things we need.

Regardless of the size of their house, people can be especially pressed for garage space, from DIYers overwhelmed with tools, to parents who need to store a growing mound of recreational equipment. Toter, a manufacturer of carts, cans and containers based in Statesville, offers these tips for garage storage.

1 Get creative

Ceiling storage racks are an excellent way to use what would otherwise be dead space. Some racks are even designed to fit directly above the area where an automatic door goes up and down. Peg boards for tools and stackable totes are also good choices.

2 Box it up

Invest in a multi-purpose job box that is the right size for your needs. Consider the shape, capacity and compartments needed to hold your tools. Rolling storage options

are great for work done only at home, while a job box may be better for those who do work elsewhere. If portability is important, look at lighter-weight options. New plastic job boxes combine the strength, durability and security of a large metal box with enhanced maneuverability.

3 Think mobility

Being able to move containers within the garage is important—make sure you have room to lift containers up and out as needed. The ability to move equipment into your vehicle and hit the road quickly also makes life a lot easier.


Pack camping equipment in containers that easily fit in your vehicle. Place frequently used items near the door, such as bikes and other sports equipment. Seasonal decorations and less-often used items can go overheard in the back of the garage.

4 Categorize

Assign and color-code dedicated areas for each type of item, such as wood-working supplies, recreation equipment or outdoor toys.

5 Keep trash in its place

To keep odors contained, select a mobile trash cart with a tight-fitting lid that's compatible with your haulers' pickup requirements and comes with a warranty. Some manufacturers also offer cart and can liners to keep your garage smelling fresh.

If you have children and/or pets, be sure to consider their safety in your storage arrangements. For example, you can stash lawn chemicals and vehicle fluids in a lockable cabinet. Along the same lines, instead of leaning equipment such as rakes or shovels against the wall, hang them to prevent a tripping hazard. 

—StatePoint

Mad for Maple

Discover the versatility of this all-natural sweetener

Winter is the perfect time to fall in love with maple syrup. Its distinct, caramelized flavor pairs well with other winter flavors, such as apples and cinnamon. It is, of course, delicious on flapjacks, but also can be used in other interesting and tasty ways throughout the day. Here are recipes for a yummy lunchtime sandwich or a toothsome appetizer for the big game. Find more creations at mccormick.com.



Maple Apple Grilled Cheese

- ¼ cup maple syrup
- ¼ teaspoon apple pie spice
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 8 slices whole wheat bread
- 8 slices (1 ounce each) sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 medium golden delicious apple, cored and cut into 16 thin slices
- 4 slices cooked bacon, coarsely chopped

Mix maple syrup and apple pie spice. Set aside.

Butter one side of each bread slice. Layer two slices of cheese and four slices of apple on each bread slice with buttered side down. Sprinkle with chopped bacon, then drizzle with maple syrup mixture. Top with remaining bread slices with buttered side up.

Place sandwiches in large skillet or griddle on medium-low heat. Cook 3 to 4 minutes per side, or until bread is browned and cheese is melted. Cook in batches, if necessary.

Yield: 4 servings



Maple Bacon Dip

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup milk
- 8 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 1 package country gravy mix
- 1½ cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese, divided
- ⅓ cup chopped red apple
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In large bowl, mix cream cheese, mayonnaise, milk, bacon, gravy mix and 1 cup cheese until well blended.

Spray 9-inch glass pie plate with nonstick cooking spray. Spread mixture in plate and top with apple and remaining cheese.

Bake 25 minutes, or until heated through and cheese is melted. Drizzle with syrup.

This dip goes well with apple slices, toasted bread cubes or crackers.

Yield: 16 servings

Five more ways to enjoy maple syrup

1. Drizzle over chicken or pork before roasting it
2. Add a spoonful to your mashed sweet potatoes
3. Mix some into softened butter for a tasty toast topping
4. Stir it, along with blueberries or cut-up peaches, into unsweetened yogurt
5. Pour over freshly popped popcorn

—FamilyFeatures.com

Tales of the Plott Hound

NC author Libby Bagby is an advocate for our state dog

By Myra Wright

Libby Bagby never intended to be a writer. But since 2008, she has penned not one, but four books about North Carolina's state dog, the Plott hound. Her first book, "Lucky's Plott," was inspired by the true rescue story of an injured Plott hound.

Driving along NC Highway 89 in Surry County in 2002, Bagby spotted the injured dog on the side of the road. He had two broken legs, but Bagby took him to a veterinarian and decided to adopt him, despite already having five dogs at the home she shares with her husband, Rick.

She soon discovered that the dog, which she named Lucky, was a Plott hound, designated as the state dog in 1989. She researched the breed and learned about its keen tracking instincts and qualities such as loyalty.

She knew she had to tell Lucky's story.

"I didn't know what I was doing," Bagby, now a retired teacher, says about writing "Lucky's Plott," which was self-published in 2008. "I just sat down on the advice of a friend. She said to sit down and write down what happened. And that's what I did...it just all came together well."

The book tells the story of Battle Cry, a Plott Hound on his first hunt of the year when he is struck by a car, an incident that changes his life.

"I was very blessed," Bagby says. "I really believe that the good Lord brought Rick and I Lucky in order to write this story because of our huge love for animals."

In addition to writing the book, Bagby decided to raise awareness about the state dog, and she began speaking at elementary schools, libraries and other organizations.

"I never taught elementary school, and I don't have kids," Bagby says. "My kids have four legs and tails. I didn't know anything about teaching that age group. So, I had to learn that, too, along with learning about the breed. It's just been amazing."

In 2009, Libby finished her second book, "Tracking Plott Hound History, North Carolina's State Dog: A Reader's Companion," which is geared toward students and educators.



"Lucky's Plott" was the first of four books focused on the Plott hound.



At home with Lucky, the rescue Plott hound who sparked her passion for the breed.

A third book, "One Lucky Dog," was published in 2013. While "Lucky's Plott" is for fourth-grade students to adults, "One Lucky Dog," tells Lucky's story, but is for kindergartners through third-graders.

"My whole thing that I have tried to do with these books is to teach what the animals are like, to incorporate their character traits, which are the same as character traits that good Tar Heels should have," Bagby says.

Most recently, Bagby penned "K9 Deputies: A Plott Hound Tale," which tells the story of Kodie and Sadie, two Plott hound puppies adopted by the Guilford County Sheriff's Department in 2013. The book follows the pups as they begin their training.


"It was a beautiful way to pay tribute to these precious two little puppies that they purchased," says Bagby, who lives in Roaring Gap.

The nonfiction book, which is co-authored with Jan Carmichael, is written from Kodie's perspective and traces the puppies' journey to becoming members of the sheriff's department. Chosen for their remarkable tracking and hunting abilities, the Plott hounds are ideal police dogs.

"They're using those God-given, wonderful noses," Bagby says.

Bagby's love of animals is evident throughout her books and storytelling. She just doesn't write about animal rescue, but she lives it. During her 42 years of marriage, she's had 12 dogs.

While Lucky passed away in 2013, she still has a 9-year-old lab named Rolo (like the candy). "We say he's chocolate on the outside and sweet on the inside," Bagby says.

Visit luckysplott.com for more information about Bagby, Plott hounds or to order books. 

Myra Wright is a North Carolina-based freelance writer. She enjoys exploring the state with her husband and three kids.

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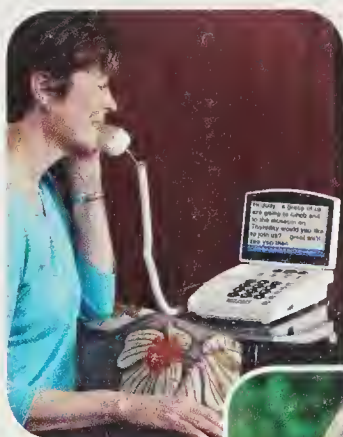
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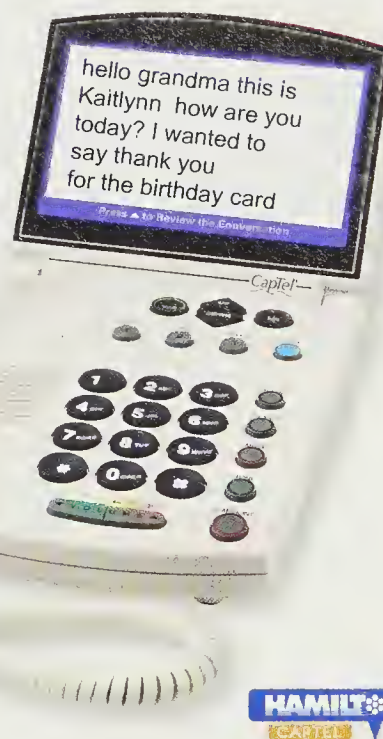
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Multiple entries from the same person will be disqualified.

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our February issue, will receive \$25.

Have a roadside gem you'd like to share? Submit a photo, plus a brief description and general location information, at carolinacountry.com/where.

December winner

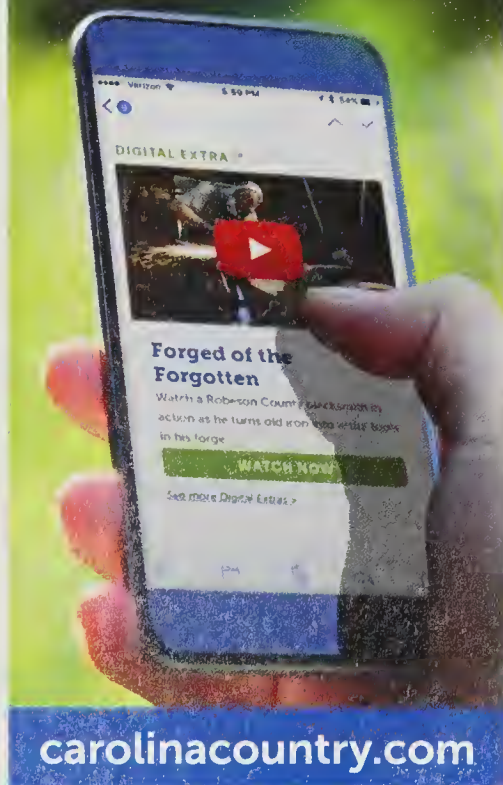
The December Where Is This photo from Angela Pullum features the Big Creek Primitive Baptist Church on Big Creek Church Road, which runs between Horseshoe Road and Collins Road in Westfield, Stokes County. Established in 1903, many readers commented that they have family members buried at this little country church. "Seeing this church reminds me of spending time with my family," commented Cristi Whitaker. The winning entry, chosen at random from all the correct submissions, came from Marsha Rumley of Brown Summit, a Brunswick EMC member.

December



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CarolinaMUSIC



Christine Rucker

JANUARY'S FEATURED TRACK

"The Plow"

By Martha Bassett

Martha Bassett's pristine voice rings true in "the Plow," an articulate song that explores darkness and new birth. It's one of many roots music tracks that explore healing in hard times on her album, "Dark of The Night." Other noteworthy songs on the new release include strong covers such as "Sin City" by Gram Parsons and Chris Hillman and "Blue" by Lucinda Williams. Martha's bandmates include Pat Lawrence (bass, vocals), Sarah Howell-Miller (keyboards, percussion, vocals), Alex McKinney (dobro), Russell Kelly (guitar), and Fiona Burdette (cello, mandolin).

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Jan. 1, NC State Parks
ncparks.gov/first-day-hikes

Winterfest Beer Festival
Ales, ciders, music
Jan. 6, Beech Mountain
828-387-2011
beechmountainresort.com

Kruger Brothers
Bluegrass, classical-folk fusion
Jan. 11, West Jefferson
336-846-2787
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MLK Day Celebration
Reflections, speech excerpts
Jan. 15, West Jefferson
336-846-2787
ashcountyyarts.org

Winterfest
Ice carvings, polar plunge
Jan. 25-28, Blowing Rock
828-295-7851
blowingrockwinterfest.com

Coffee House Live!
Several musical performances
Jan. 27, West Jefferson
336-846-2787
ashcountyyarts.org

Piedmont

First Day Hike
Led by park rangers
Jan. 1, NC State Parks
ncparks.gov/first-day-hikes

KwanzaaFest
Dancing, face painting
Jan. 1, Durham
bit.ly/AADE-kwanzaa

12th Night: The Vanishing Holiday
Lecture, medieval carols
Jan. 6, Charlotte
704-889-7145
polk@ncdcr.gov

Tree Toss
Animals play with new greenery
Jan. 6 & 20, Burlington
888-650-1139
conservatorscenter.org

Derik Nelson & Family
Three-part harmony
Jan. 9, Pembroke
910-521-6361
uncp.edu/gpac

The French Connection
Chamber music
Jan. 11, Fayetteville
910-433-4690
fayettevillesymphony.org


Music of the New World
Bernstein, Gershwin pieces
Jan. 25, Fayetteville
910-433-4690
fayettevillesymphony.org

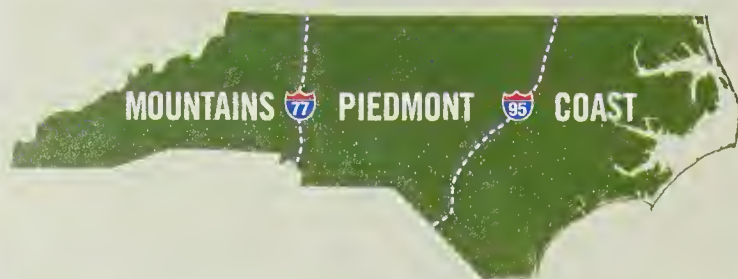
African American Cultural Celebration
Musicians, storytellers, dancers
Jan. 27, Raleigh
919-807-7900
ncmuseumofhistory.org

Connect with Culture Day
Artists, bluegrass
Jan. 27, Pineville
704-889-7145
jameskpolk.net

ONGOING

Chinese Lantern Festival
Handmade lanterns
Through Jan. 14, Cary
919-462-2025
boothamphitheatre.com

 carolinacountry.com/calendar
See more events online with photos, descriptions, maps and directions.



Listing Deadlines: For Mar.: Jan. 25
For Apr.: Feb. 25

Submit Listings Online:
carolinacountry.com/calendar
(No email or U.S. Mail.)



First Friday Artwalk
Jan. 5, Elizabeth City



KwanzaaFest
Jan. 1, Durham

Resolutions 2018

2D & 3D media
Jan. 3–21, Hillsborough
919-732-5001
hillsboroughgallery.com

Coast

First Day Hike

Led by park rangers
Jan. 1, NC State Parks
ncparks.gov/first-day-hikes

Uptown First Friday Artwalk

Free trolley rides
Jan. 5, Greenville
252-561-8400
uptowngreenville.com

First Friday Artwalk

Guest artists, musicians
Jan. 5, Elizabeth City
252-338-4104
ecdowntown.com

Silver Coast Bridal Show

Door prizes, vendors
Jan. 14, Ocean Isle Beach
910-287-2800
silvercoastwinery.com

Well-Strung

Classical-pop fusion
Jan. 23, Pembroke
910-521-6361
uncp.edu/gpac

Soloman Howard, Deb Nansteel

African American Music Series
Jan. 12, Greenville
252-551-6947
pittcountyarts.org

Svetlana & The Delancey Five

Jazz vocals, instrumentals
Jan. 20, Oriental
252-617-2125
pamlicomusic.org

Jolly Skull Festival

Beer, wine sampling
Jan. 20, Greenville
252-321-7671
beerarmy.org/events

Carolina Outdoor Expo

Seminars, sports vendors
Jan. 26–28, Greenville
252-321-7671
carolinaoutdoorexpo.com

ONGOING

Winterlights

Holiday lights at Elizabethan Gardens
Through Jan. 20, Manteo
252-473-3234
elizabethangardens.org/winterlights-obx



Know Before You Go

In case something changes
after Carolina Country goes to
press, check information from
the contact listed.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Your Favorite Roadside Attraction

One of the best parts of a road trip is what you find along the way—the unexpected museum where you stretched your legs, or the giant metal chicken that made for a great photo op. For our April 2018 travel guide, we need to hear from readers where we should stop! We will pay \$25 for each submission that is printed in our April issue.

Rules

Deadline: February 15, 2018

One entry per household

Limit text to 100 words or less.

Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and email address or phone number with your entry.

If submitting a photo, prints should be a minimum of 4 x 6 inches.

We retain reprint and online rights. Payment will be limited to those entries appearing in print, not entries featured solely on carolinacountry.com.

Send to

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carolinacountry.com/roadside
No emails, please.

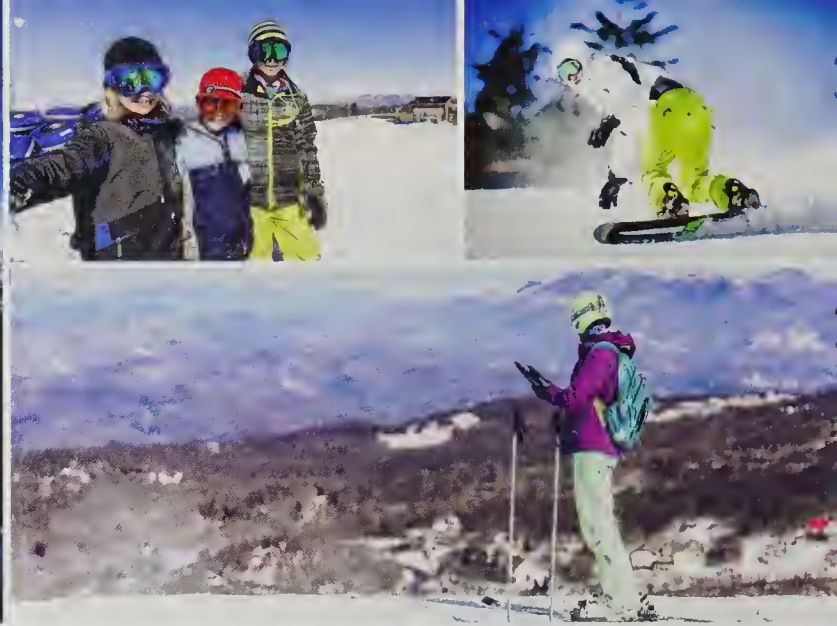
Mail:

Carolina Country—
Roadside Attractions
3400 Sumner Blvd.
Raleigh, NC 27616

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CAROLINA COUNTRY adventures



Beech Mountain Celebrates 50 Years of Skiing

Find alpine adventure in the
cold climates of the NC mountains

Opening a ski resort in the Southeast may have been seen as a foolish move back in the winter of 1967-68, but one Alabama dentist knew such a resort, built around an alpine village in the North Carolina mountains, would thrive. In the winter of 1967-68, Dr. Thomas Brigham—with the help of local developers and brothers Grover, Spencer and Harry Robbins—realized his dream and opened Beech Mountain Resort for business.

At 5,506 feet in elevation, the resort remains one of the highest ski areas in the East. The small town of Beech Mountain receives a yearly snowfall average of 90 inches and the ski resort snowmaking abilities cover the 95 skiable acres.

“Skiing in the South was just being developed, and this was a unique facility at 5,506 feet in elevation with a Swiss Bavarian village. It exposed the Southeast market to something new,” says general manager Ryan Costin. “That continues to be one of our strongest assets—a layout where you can navigate the village and experience all the wintertime activities we have here.”

Over the decades, the resort has increased skiable acreage, upgraded snowmaking abilities, increased trails and lifts, and added snowboarding, ice skating and snow tubing to its winter

activity mix. The resort features four restaurants, ski shops and a sky bar located on the slope.

New this winter is a streamlined check-in process in which customers purchase lift tickets and rental equipment at a central location, then go straight through the fitting process to hit the slopes in less time. Customers also can buy multi-day tickets and multi-day rentals to avoid repeating the same process each day.

“Going into the 50th year, we took a hard look at not only the product on the mountain, but the process, too. That’s one of the elements we needed to make easier,” Costin explains. “We want people to spend as much time outside enjoying activities as they possibly can.”

Though the resort strives to stay modern, for this special 50th year, customers will be able to “ski like it’s 1967,” with reduced lift ticket prices for night skiing opportunities throughout the season. Anniversary events are also scheduled January 20–28.

“It’s an exciting year for us and we look forward to another half century of serving skiers across the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions,” Costin says. “A lot of people are surprised at just how good a winter season we have. Our infrastructure provides a strong product all winter.” ☑

Hit the Slopes

The NC ski season usually lasts until late March or early April, depending on conditions. Check out these other ski resorts based throughout the NC mountains:

Appalachian Ski Mountain

Blowing Rock
appskimtn.com
800-322-2373

Cataloochee Ski Area

Maggie Valley
cataloochee.com
800-768-0285

Sapphire Valley Ski Resort

Sapphire
skisapphirevalley.com
828-743-7663

Sugar Mountain Resort

Banner Elk
skisugar.com
800-784-2768

Wolf Ridge Ski Resort

Mars Hill
skiwolfridgenc.com
800-817-4111

Visit goskinc.com for more information about NC slopes.

Beech Stats

- **Skiable acres:** 95
- **Vertical Drop:** 830 ft.
- **Base Elevation:** 4,675 ft.
- **Longest Run:** 1 mile
- **Lifts:** 9
- **Trails:** 17 trails from easiest, more difficult, most difficult to freestyle

Beech Mountain Resort

beechmountainresort.com | beechmtn.com
800-438-2093

"To you, it's the perfect lift chair. To me, it's the best sleep chair I've ever had."

— J. Fitzgerald, VA



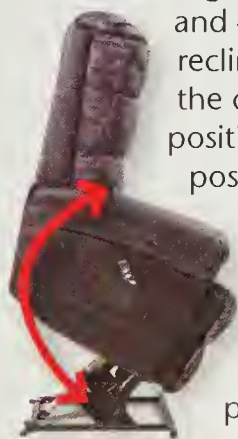
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We've all had nights when we just can't lie down in bed and sleep, whether it's from heartburn, cardiac problems, hip or back aches – it could be a variety of reasons. Those are the nights we'd give anything for a comfortable chair to sleep in, one that reclines to exactly the right degree, raises feet and legs to precisely the desired level, supports the head and shoulders properly, operates easily even in the dead of night, and sends a hopeful sleeper right off to dreamland.

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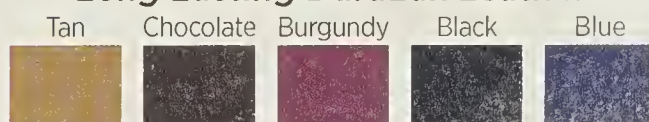
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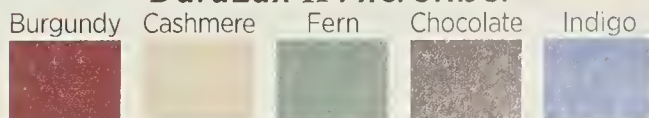
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Upland, by Appointment

Hunting preserves offer upland bird hunting in a controlled setting

By Mike Zlotnicki

Annie, my German shorthaired pointer, had slammed to a point next to a row of amber broomstraw. Bentley, an American Brittany, was honoring her point a few yards back. Tim Britt flushed the birds—three quail rocketed out of the cover. He and Thomas Harvey (Bentley's owner) each dropped a bird. I sent Annie after one retrieve while Bentley made the other. It was a scene to be repeated many times that day.

There was a time in North Carolina where the sequence above was commonplace from the Piedmont to the Coastal Plain. Wild bobwhite quail were abundant in rural areas. But factors such as modern farming practices and land development have taken their toll on wild quail populations.

On that November day, we were hunting at Devil's Rib Hunting Preserve in Peachland. Hunting preserves don't feature wild birds, but offer pen-raised quail, chukar and ring-necked pheasant for put-and-take hunting. It's the hunting equivalent of a stocked pond. They are great places to introduce dogs, youth and new hunters to upland gunning in a safe, controlled environment, or just enjoy a day afield with friends. And the birds make for tasty meals.

After the hunt, I asked Britt why he frequented hunting preserves. Although a wild quail hunt is an experience in its own, preserves do meet his current wants and needs.

"I grew up on a tobacco farm in Sampson County in the 1960s and 1970s, where wild quail were our pursuit and there were plenty to be found at the time. We hunted our own coveys as well as all the coveys on local farms, because my dad knew everyone and had their blessing to 'shoot as many birds as you like.' We also had six or seven well-bred and highly trained bird dogs in our kennel," Britt explains. "Preserves afford me the pleasure and nostalgic connection to my youth and memories of my father, who is now gone."



Tim Britt of Charlotte moves to flush a quail pointed by Bentley, left, a Brittany, and Annie, right, a German Shorthaired pointer.

An accessible experience

Like golf courses, hunting preserves can offer the same activity yet vary tremendously in price. Most of this is due to ancillary amenities such as guide fees, lodging, meals and general ambiance. The golf analogy is apt, as while the activity is the same on the local municipal course as it is at a high-dollar resort, it's the extras you pay extra for. And there's no shortage of business for the higher-end hunting operations.

For example, I have a couple of German shorthaired pointers. The older dog (Annie) and I spent many training sessions at Anderson Creek Hunting Preserve in Lillington. There's an old saying "it takes birds to make a bird dog." By buying a few birds at a time and creating training scenarios, I was able to finish

Annie—which includes shooting birds over her—in a safe, controlled environment. In this case, the "municipal" course becomes a "driving range."

Now that his career and life are not on the farm, Britt appreciates the accessibility a hunting preserve experience provides.

"I can book a hunt, invite a friend or two, bring my gear and arrive at the preserve knowing the main critical components are in place. The hunt goes well. The time and conversation with friends unfolds. I get to watch the dogs work. I reconnect with my roots, my past and my now-gone dad. My heart, mind and soul are lifted. Life is good." 🐾

Mike Zlotnicki is associate editor at *Wildlife in North Carolina* magazine. He lives in Garner with his wife, three daughters and two German shorthaired pointers.

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Outdoor Access connects outdoor enthusiasts with landowners interested in leasing their property without giving up control or taking on liability. *Whether you have 5 acres or 5,000 – we can help you generate the best return on investment for your land.* You retain complete control over your lands availability, as much or as little as you'd like – we take care of the reservations and make sure you are happy, fairly compensated, and financially protected every step of the way! **Here's how it works:**

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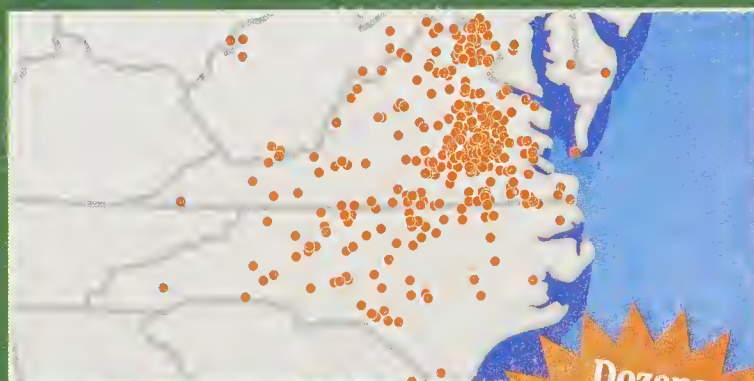
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"People will stop me and say 'Hey, can I hunt on your land?' but I have been saying no because I don't know who these people are. Since I've signed up for Outdoor Access, I've had a great experience! Every single person has been polite and respectful – I would highly recommend it ... and you get a nice check in the mail!"



**Dozens
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OutdoorAccess.com/carolinacountry**

How Smart Should Your Thermostat Be?

By Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen

If you have an older thermostat in your home, it may be worth considering an upgrade. Today, many thermostats offer great new technologies and can do things thermostats of the past simply could not do. That said, it's certainly worth asking if these new thermostats can save enough money to justify the extra cost.

Let's start by looking at the three main options for thermostats: manual, programmable and smart.

The main benefits of a **manual thermostat** are that it's simple to operate and there are no batteries to wear out and replace. You just have to remember to raise and lower the temperature setting in the morning and evening, and whenever you leave the house.

The second option is the **programmable thermostat**. Typically, this type of thermostat allows settings for four different periods each day. Some models can even handle a different schedule for each day of the week. You control the settings so they will suit your climate, schedule and temperature preferences. You can easily override your program settings anytime.



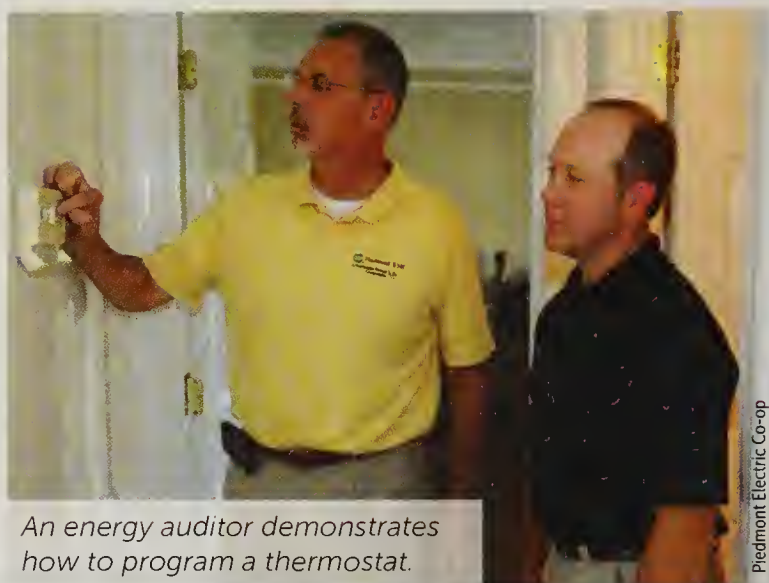
Smart thermostats learn from your behavior to maximize energy savings.

The third option is a **smart, or "learning" thermostat**. A smart thermostat connects to a home's Wi-Fi network. After installation, you input the basics of your schedule and temperature. Over time, as you change the settings, it learns your schedule and adjusts to minimize energy use. Smart thermostats also can detect when no one is home. You also can

control it remotely by using a smartphone or tablet app.

If your electric co-op has a demand response program that offers discounts for using less power during peak energy use hours, a smart thermostat can provide additional savings on your monthly power bill.

The move to smart technology is a significant investment. Units can cost up to \$400, although one manufacturer has a new model for about \$170. It's also important to note not all homes have the proper wiring in place to accommodate smart thermostats, so you may need to hire a professional to handle the installation.



An energy auditor demonstrates how to program a thermostat.

Piedmont Electric Co-op

Worth the cost?

Are newer, more expensive thermostats worth the extra cost? How much a thermostat can save depends on how much you spend on heating and cooling your house.


You can estimate your heating and cooling expenses by examining your electric bills (and other utility bills) related to heating your home. Compare the bills for winter and summer to those for spring and fall. Most of the difference is likely due to heating and cooling. If that amount is more than \$900 per year, which is the national average, you have a better chance of a good return on your investment.

The second factor that will determine how much you can save is how you are operating your old thermostat. If you are conscientious about adjusting the temperature to save energy when you're leaving the house or going to bed, the new thermostat may not reduce your bills that much, even if you program it correctly or if it learns your behavior.

Thermostat efficiency tips

Whichever direction you go, remember there are other ways you can use your thermostat more efficiently:

- Don't adjust the thermostat temperature drastically in the hopes of making it heat or cool your home more quickly.
- For the greatest savings during winter months, keep the temperature at or below 68 degrees Fahrenheit while you are home during the day, and cooler during the night. During summer months, keep it at or above 78 degrees Fahrenheit while you are home.
- You can save up to 10 percent off your monthly heating and cooling bill by turning back your thermostat by 7 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit for eight hours a day.

The thermostat is just one piece of the energy efficiency puzzle. You might be able to save more by adding insulation or sealing air leaks. A professional energy audit is always the best way to identify your home's energy weaknesses—contact your electric cooperative for more information. 

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. Visit carolinacountry.com/your-energy for more ideas on energy efficiency.

**Bigger
Buttons**

“My friends all hate their cell phones... I love mine!” Here’s why.

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Say good-bye to everything you hate about cell phones. Say hello to the Jitterbug Flip.

“Cell phones have gotten so small, I can barely dial mine.” Not the Jitterbug® Flip. It features a large keypad for easier dialing. It even has a larger display and a powerful, hearing aid compatible speaker, so it’s easy to see and conversations are clear.

“I had to get my son to program it.” Your Jitterbug Flip setup process is simple. We’ll even program it with your favorite numbers.

“What if I don’t remember a number?” Friendly, helpful Personal Operators are available 24 hours a day and will even greet you by name when you call.

“I’d like a cell phone to use in an emergency.” Now you can turn your phone into a personal safety device with 5Star® Service. In any uncertain or unsafe situation, simply press the 5Star button to speak immediately with a highly-trained Urgent Response Agent who will confirm your location, evaluate your situation and get you the help you need, 24/7.

“My cell phone company wants to lock me in a two-year contract!” Not with the Jitterbug Flip. There are no contracts to sign and no cancellation fees.



Monthly Plan	\$14.99/mo ¹	\$19.99/mo ¹
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Voice Dial	FREE	FREE
Nationwide Coverage	YES	YES
30-Day Return Policy ²	YES	YES

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Ask your Jitterbug expert for details.

“My phone’s battery only lasts a short time.” Unlike most cell phones that need to be recharged every day, the Jitterbug Flip was designed with a long-lasting battery, so you won’t have to worry about running out of power.

“Many phones have features that are rarely needed and hard to use!” The Jitterbug Flip contains easy-to-use features that are meaningful to you. A built-in camera makes it easy and fun for you to capture and share your favorite memories. And a flashlight with a built-in magnifier helps you see in dimly lit areas. The Jitterbug Flip has all the features you need.

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Clothes Dryers: Use Only as Intended

Venting dryers indoors is no longer considered a safe option

By Hannah McKenzie

Q: Carolina Country ran an On the House article in November 2011 about venting the dryer exhaust indoors as a source of heat and moisture. I feel unclear about whether this is a good or bad idea. I would love to save money on my heating bill and for my house to be less dry in the winter, but is this a safe solution?

A: Winter is a tough time on our wallets with higher heating bills and holiday and travel expenses. The 2011 article indicated that venting inside is “more trouble than it’s worth,” although I will go a step further and say that it is no longer considered a safe option. I understand your desire to use dryer heat, but like using an oven to heat your home, using a dryer in a way that is not intended is dangerous.

Venting a dryer indoors—including into a crawl space, basement or attic—violates the Residential Building Code and poses a fire hazard. Additionally, the sheer amount of moisture from a dryer creates a breeding ground for mold, which will attract pests, cause deterioration of your home, and often trigger respiratory or other health problems.

Through weatherization, there are safer and more effective ways to decrease your winter heating bill, such as having the HVAC ductwork professionally sealed, closing holes leaking air into the attic, weatherstripping, lowering the thermostat, and making sure Junior’s bedroom window is properly latched.

To make the air in your home feel less dry in the winter, consider weatherizing to prevent outside air from coming indoors. Furthermore, occasionally using a room humidifier with a relative humidity set to 60 percent may be helpful.

To keep the cost of running the dryer to a minimum, keep these tips in mind:

1 Use the fastest spin cycle on your clothes washer. Energy Star®-labeled clothes washers remove more water from clothes because they spin faster than standard models. Less wet clothes means less drying time.



2 Empty the dryer lint trap after each use.

Lint builds up quickly on the removable filter and can hamper the flow of air from the heated dryer, as well as pose a fire risk (lint is highly flammable and can actually be reused as a fire starter for wood-burning fireplaces or outdoor fires). Keeping the lint trap clean and the airflow clear will also help your dryer work more quickly and efficiently.

3 Air-dry clothes when the conditions are right.

Air-drying clothes indoors may produce mildew depending on your home’s interior humidity, so outdoors in the sunshine is best. If you have space, drying clothes on a rack that is a safe distance from a woodstove may be an option.

4 Use the “energy saver” setting on your dryer.

This will ensure that the dryer’s moisture sensor determines when the clothing is dry and will turn off the machine automatically.

5 Don’t overfill or underfill the dryer.

Overfilling or underfilling a dryer will prevent items from drying quickly. Consult the user manual and pay attention to find the sweet spot of a full, but not too-full, dryer.

6 Use a matching washer and dryer set.

While many of us couldn’t care less about whether our washer and dryer set matches, manufacturers actually make Energy Star-labeled units that come in pairs so that a full washer load will fit into the dryer. Without a matched set, sometimes we end up splitting the washing machine load into two dryer loads.

When looking for ways to save money, it is important to be aware of potential hazards—like blowing moist hot air into your home—and to explore other home improvements that lower energy costs without putting your family’s health and safety at risk. ☐

Hannah McKenzie is a residential building science consultant for Advanced Energy in Raleigh.

Drug Companies Fear Release of the New AloeCure

Big Pharma stands to lose billions as doctors' recommend drug-free "health cocktail" that adjusts and corrects your body's health conditions.

by David Waxman
Seattle Washington:

Drug company execs are nervous. That's because the greatest health advance in decades has hit the streets. And analysts expect it to put a huge crimp in "Big Pharma" profits.

So what's all the fuss about? It's about a new ingredient that's changing the lives of people who use it. Some call it "the greatest discovery since penicillin"!

The name of the product is the AloeCure. It's not a drug. It's something completely different. And the product is available to anyone who wants it, at a reasonable price. But demands may force future prices to rise.

TOP DOC WARNS: DIGESTION DRUGS CAN CRIPPLE YOU!

Company spokesperson, Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist recommends AloeCure before she decides to prescribe any digestion drug. Especially after the FDA's stern warning about long-term use of drugs classified as proton pump inhibitors like **Prilosec®**, **Nexium®**, and **Prevacid®**. In a nutshell, the FDA statement warned people should avoid taking these digestion drugs for longer than three 14-day treatment periods because there is an increased risk of bone fractures. Many people take them daily and for decades.

Dr. Leal should know. Many patients come to her with bone and joint complaints and she does everything she can to help them. One way for digestion sufferers to help avoid possible risk of tragic joint and bone problems caused by overuse of digestion drugs is to take the AloeCure.

Analysts expect the AloeCure to put a huge crimp in "Big Pharma" profits.

The secret to AloeCure's "health adjusting" formula is scientifically tested Acemannan, a polysaccharide extracted from Aloe Vera. But not the same aloe vera that mom used to apply to your cuts, scrapes and burns. This is a perfect strain of aloe that is organically grown under very strict conditions. AloeCure is so powerful it begins to benefit your health the instant you take it. It soothes intestinal discomfort and you can avoid the possibility of bone and health damage caused by overuse of digestion drugs. We all know how well aloe works externally on cuts, scrapes and burns. But did you know

Acemannan has many of other health benefits?...

HELPS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM TO CALM INFLAMMATION

According to a leading aloe research, when correctly processed for digesting, the Aloe plant has a powerful component for regulating your immune system called Acemannan. So whether it's damage that is physical, bacterial, chemical or autoimmune; the natural plant helps the body stay healthy.

RAPID ACID AND HEARTBURN NEUTRALIZER

Aloe has proved to have an astonishing effect on users who suffer with digestion problems like bouts of acid reflux, heartburn, cramping, gas and constipation because it acts as a natural acid buffer and soothes the digestive system. But new studies prove it does a whole lot more.

SIDE-STEP HEART CONCERNS

So you've been taking proton pump inhibitors (PPI's) for years and you feel just fine. In June of 2015 a major study shows that chronic PPI use increases the risk of heart attack in general population.

UNLEASH YOUR MEMORY

Studies show that your brain needs the healthy bacteria from your gut in order function at its best. Both low and high dosages of digestion drugs are proven to destroy that healthy bacteria and get in the way of brain function. So you're left with a sluggish, slow-to-react brain without a lot of room to store information. The acemannan used in AloeCure actually makes your gut healthier, so healthy bacteria flows freely to your brain so you think better, faster and with a larger capacity for memory.

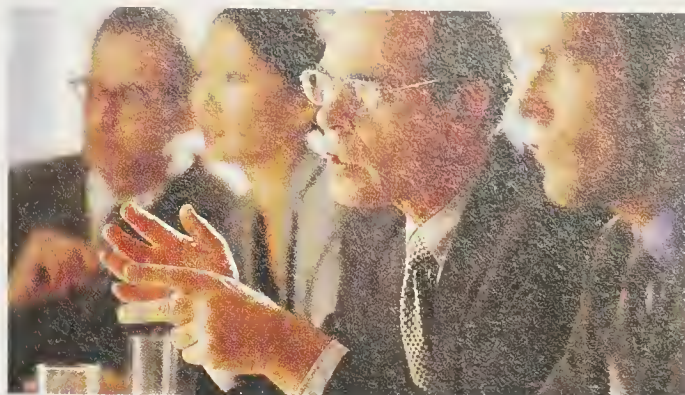
Doctors call it "The greatest health discovery in decades!"

SLEEP LIKE A BABY

A night without sleep really damages your body. And continued lost sleep can lead to all sorts of health problems. But what you may not realize is the reason why you're not sleeping. Some call it "Ghost Reflux". A low-intensity form of acid reflux discomfort that quietly keeps you awake in the background. AloeCure helps digestion so you may find yourself sleeping through the night.

CELEBRITY HAIR, SKIN & NAILS

Certain antacids may greatly reduce your



body's ability to break down and absorb calcium. Aloe delivers calcium as it aids in balancing your stomach acidity. The result? Thicker, healthier looking hair...more youthful looking skin... And nails so strong they may never break again.

SAVE YOUR KIDNEY

National and local news outlets are reporting Kidney Failure linked to PPI's. Your Kidney extracts waste from blood, balance body fluids, form urine, and aid in other important functions of the body. Without it your body would be overrun by deadly toxins. Aloe helps your kidney function properly. Studies suggest, if you started taking aloe today; you'd see a big difference in the way you feel.

GUARANTEED RESULTS OR DOUBLE YOUR MONEY BACK

Due to the incredible results people are reporting, AloeCure is being sold with an equally incredible guarantee.

"We can only offer this incredible guarantee because we are 100% certain this product will work for those who use it," Says Dr. Leal.

Here's how it works: Take the pill exactly as directed. You must see and feel remarkable improvements in your digestive health, your mental health, in your physical appearance, the amount inflammation you have throughout your body - even in your ability to fall asleep at night!

Otherwise, simply return the empty bottles with a short note about how you took the pills and followed the simple instructions and the company will send you...Double your money back!

HOW TO GET ALOECURE

This is the official nationwide release of the new AloeCure pill in the United States. And so, the company is offering our readers up to 3 FREE bottles with their order.

This special give-away is available for readers of this publication only. All you have to do is call TOLL-FREE **1-800-591-2960** and provide the operator with the Free Bottle Approval Code: JC025. The company will do the rest.

Important: Due to AloeCure's recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.



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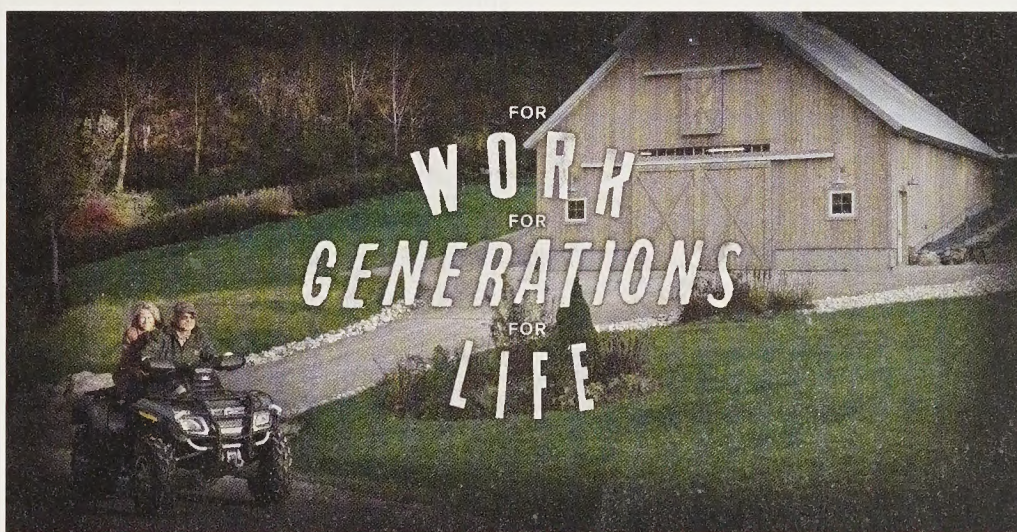
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Winter Citrus Salad

With Blood Orange & Red Wine Vinaigrette

Vibrant citrus fruits are plentiful in the dead of winter, and this is a great salad to brighten the dreariest of days. Don't worry about exact measurements for salad ingredients. Use as much or as little as suits your fancy.

Citrus Salad

- 2 Blood oranges
- 2 Naval oranges
- 2 Clementines and/or tangerines
- 2 Limes
- 2 Lemons
- 2 Red grapefruit
- Seeds from one pomegranate
- 1 avocado, cubed
- 1 cup chopped pistachio nuts
- Freshly ground pepper (we used pink peppercorns)
- Fresh mint, optional

Vinaigrette

- ½ cup grapeseed oil
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon red grapefruit juice
- 2 tablespoons blood orange juice
- 1 tablespoon blood orange zest
- 3 tablespoons honey
- ½ teaspoon dried spearmint
- Pinch of salt

Peel the citrus fruits and cut into thin slices, removing any seeds. Place onto platter along with avocado. Garnish with pomegranate seeds, nuts, pepper and sprigs of mint.

For vinaigrette: Put all ingredients in jar with lid and shake to blend. Best if made at least one hour ahead.

Yield: About 6 servings

+ carolinacountry.com/recipes

What's the best way to harvest the arils (seeds) from a pomegranate? Wendy shares her go-to technique on our website.

From Your Kitchen

Grandma's Sugar Cookies

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 sticks softened butter
- 1½ cups flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Beat sugar gradually into butter. Combine flour, soda, vinegar, vanilla and salt in a separate bowl. Combine the sugar mixture and the flour mixture, adding a little at a time. Roll into small balls on ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake for 10 to 15 minutes.

Recipe courtesy of Ann Westra of Youngsville



Send Us Your Recipes

Contributors whose recipes are published will receive \$25. We retain reprint rights for all submissions. Recipes submitted are not necessarily entirely original. Include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Mail to: Carolina Country Kitchen, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC, 27611. Or submit your recipe online at: carolinacountry.com/myrecipe.

—Jenny Lloyd, recipes editor



Carrot Cake Muffins

With Pineapple Whipped Cream

Enjoy these gluten-free, moist and flavorful muffins for breakfast, as a late morning snack, or even alongside a bowl of soup or chowder. The recipe is easily doubled so you can freeze to "heat 'n eat."

- 2½ cups almond meal
- ½ cup brown sugar
- Pinch sea salt
- 1½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking spice
- 2 cups (about 3 large) carrots, grated
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- 4 tablespoons mayonnaise (Duke's preferred)
- 3 eggs

Whipped Cream Topping

- ½ pint heavy whipping cream
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 1 can (8-ounce) crushed pineapple in juice, well drained
- 1 tablespoon honey
- Almond meal crumbs for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine dry ingredients in mixing bowl. Add remaining ingredients and stir to combine. Line 12-cup muffin pan with papers. Divide mixture into cupcake papers.

Bake about 20 to 25 minutes until tops spring back to touch.

For topping: Whip cream and cheese with mixer until stiff. Fold in extract, pineapple and honey. At serving time, top each cooled muffin with a dollop of the whipped cream. Dust with almond meal crumbs to garnish.

Yield: One dozen muffins

Unless otherwise noted, recipes on this page are from Wendy Perry, a culinary adventurer specializing in NC-made food products and small NC farms.

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